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NATO's Forward "Layer Cake" Defense-An Outdated Concept (U)

by

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Major, US Army

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

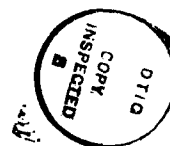
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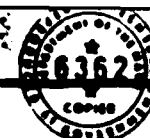
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ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The past two years have seen remarkable changes in the world political situation, especially in Europe. The Gorbachev policies of glasnost, perestroika and new thinking in the Soviet Union have initiated or accelerated the reform process in all Warsaw Pact countries. The falling of the Berlin wall, the unification of Germany and free German elections, and the independence movements of previous Soviet satellites has caused tremendous euphoria throughout the world and especially in NATO.

While the success of NATO for the past 41 years and the Cold War victory has focused political attention on the "peace dividend" that countries can gain; the analysis of NATO's future military role in this restructured environment continues.¹

NATO's success has been credited, in part, to her military strategy of Flexible Response and Forward Defense. Who can argue that it has been unsuccessful in light of the peace and stability it has brought to the people of Europe? NATO's current operational concept based on the "layer cake" deployment of its forces is now inadequate and does not meet the criteria of future security requirements based on projected resources and directed political guidance. This paper will analyze this "layer cake" concept in light of the most recent events and will conclude that NATO currently has an inadequate defensive operational concept. I will focus on

the Central front in this analysis.

CHAPTER II

ASSUMPTIONS

In order to set the stage for this analysis it is necessary that I provide a scenario from which to analyze the forward defense, "layer cake" concept and make a small number of critical assumptions .

The year is 1995; democracies and market economies are being established in Eastern Europe; Soviet troop withdrawals from Germany are complete; Nuclear weapons are being removed from Central Europe; US and Soviet strategic forces are cut to CFE levels²; and European armed force levels are at historic lows.

Specifically setting the NATO force size and composition, NATO forces have been reduced to five Corps, consisting of fifteen Divisions. All five Corps are multinational. This assumed force structure reflects a reduction of 32% from current manning levels.³ The Soviet forces have 48 Divisions west of the Urals plus five Airborne Divisions and 20 Divisions in Reserve.⁴

I will assume a Defensive concept will be approved by NATO. One that assumes the Soviets would have to attack through Eastern Europe with some resistance. The old IGB continues to be the NATO deployment line as German territorial forces continue to occupy the old East German sector.⁵ A NATO transition into this sector following the Soviet troop withdrawal has been met with strong resistance

from the German population. We will have two months to react to strategic indications and warnings of any Soviet offensive action.

I will also assume that all NATO nations will contribute to the defense. There will be no change from current commitments to the alliance.

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND

There has been a large amount of speculation as to the direction that NATO should be heading in the future. The political guidance for the NATO military committee, charged with the development of the military plan, is best captured in the London Declaration made by the Heads of State and Government in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 5-6 July 1990.⁶ The first significant change is the focus of the defense. It will be focused on "what to defend" verses whom. The alliance will be looking at defending all of NATO territory by training to tasks that are generic military tasks and not against some specific military threat. (Soviets/Warsaw Pact) NATO will need to do more training up to capabilities, for example to move rapidly over longer distances and fight on arrival. "It might be that we, for the first time, have to plan for an improved reinforcement capability to outside the Central Region, instead of concentrating everything into it."⁷

Another change will be the development and transition to a multinational force structure. It is felt that with the initial 15% reduction of forces that the national Corps will invariably fall out. NATO will need maneuver forces of the right size and command structure to lead, integrate air, ground, sea, etc. Therefore it is felt that a Corps headquarters will be needed at a minimum. There is still a

debate as to the level of the multinational force. General Galvin ,SACEUR, has stated that he sees the divisions being national, but the Corps multinational. Such forces will place a premium on interoperability and standardization.

The final major change will be the resourcing of the NATO defensive alliance at lower levels of infrastructure and military budget. This reduction is a matter of record in the recent CFE talks. The US and Soviets have agreed to a 195,000 man ceiling for their forces in the theater. The Germans agreed to a reduction to 370,000 soldiers when they underwent unification. "Overall NATO forces will be smaller, but they will need to be mobile, flexible, sustainable and technologically advanced."S

It is within this framework that the political leaders of NATO have charged their military leaders to continue their defense.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH

In order to analyze the adequacy of the "layer cake" defensive operational concept, it is necessary that we understand clearly what this current strategy and concept are and that we appreciate some of the alternate strategies that have been proposed. But first it is imperative that we understand what planning principles that the SACEUR, General Galvin, has made and will expect us to incorporate in these strategies.

SACEUR GUIDANCE

General Galvin outlined his planning principles with regard to NATO's next military strategy on 12 July 1990. He stated that :

"First, we will have a strategy that's very dependent on arms control. It will also depend on a matrix of treaties and NATO. The crisis management abilities of NATO will be very important to us. Next, the smaller forces defending the same terrain will mean that mobility will be the byword of the new strategy. It will also be a strategy of force generation and reinforcement because the standing forces will be smaller and the reserves used to augment them will have to be readily available. It will be a strategy requiring different levels of readiness, reaction, and response capabilities because we anticipate longer warning times. It will be a strategy that involves deescalation capability because if you build a strategy of mobilization, it can get out of control unless you have adequate machinery to reverse it..."⁹

General Galvin was basically outlining the implications of recent trends in NATO weapon systems, forces, resources and the lessening threat of a Central Front battle with the

Soviets.

Weapon systems have increased in cost, complexity and lethality. They have also increased in range and accuracy. Current sensor capability has increased tremendously, while the number of weapon systems produced has declined. As a result of these trends in weapon systems, greater fidelity for intelligence and target acquisition is present and there is a greater range, accuracy and lethality of precision munitions. (Witness the current success in Iraq) There are fewer weapon systems built and purchased due to their complexity and costs.¹⁰

NATO's armies have been under constant pressure from their respective governments to reduce the size of their forces.¹¹ With this reduction in numbers will come a less dense battlefield. These trends have led to the movement toward a non-linear type of warfare which will require an increased mobility of its forces.

A reduction in the primary resources for NATO, national budgets and fewer military age personnel, will also have implications reflected in smaller and less expensive armies.

The conclusions that General Galvin draws from these trends is reflected in his stated principles. The battlefield will become non-linear, NATO will know where significant enemy forces are almost all of the time, and NATO will have the capacity to engage him at long range with very accurate and lethal systems.

CURRENT STRATEGY

NATO's current operational strategy for Forward Defense was in reaction to its loss of operational depth as a result of France's withdrawal from NATO in 1966. It was outlined in MC 14/3 in 1967 and included the operational concept for a Flexible Response. Under flexible response, while NATO would meet a conventional threat with conventional forces, the first use of nuclear weapons, if required, was not ruled out. This strategy recognized that the political and geographical realities required the battle to be waged as far forward as possible. It also remained a prerequisite for Germany's membership in NATO as she has 25% of her industry and 30% of her population within 100k of the East German border.¹²

Using the NATO force and composition that I have outlined in chapter II, these five Corps would be shouldered along the old IGB. They would be deployed by "layer cake" design as seen in Figure 1. In the north would be a Multinational Corps made up of the Netherlands and British; next would be another multinational corps made up of the Belgium, British and the Germans, The third and fourth layers would be German-American Corps, the southern tier a German, American and Canadian Corps. This disposition of forces would make maximum use of the current plan with minimum movements.



Figure 1/ Current Layer Cake Deployment

ALTERNATE STRATEGIES/CONCEPTS

There have been numerous alternate strategies and concepts presented prior to the London Declaration. Given new military technology they felt NATO could adopt a non provocative "defensive defense". Some are still worthy of analysis and will be discussed as feasible alternatives. The only post London Declaration strategy/concept presented was

done so by the CINCENT, General Hans-Henning von Sandrart (WGer), and it is also presented as an alternative concept.¹³

Area Defense/Chessboard Model

The first strategy I will discuss is the Horst Afheldt Area Defense or Chessboard Model. (Figure 2) It has as its primary element a decentralized network of 10,000 "technocommando" units. Each unit has 25 men and is responsible for a 10-15 square kilometer area. He asserts that if each unit destroys three armored vehicles the defense will be successful. This model is dependent on an invulnerable communications system and the accuracy of the antiarmor weapons and rocket launchers.

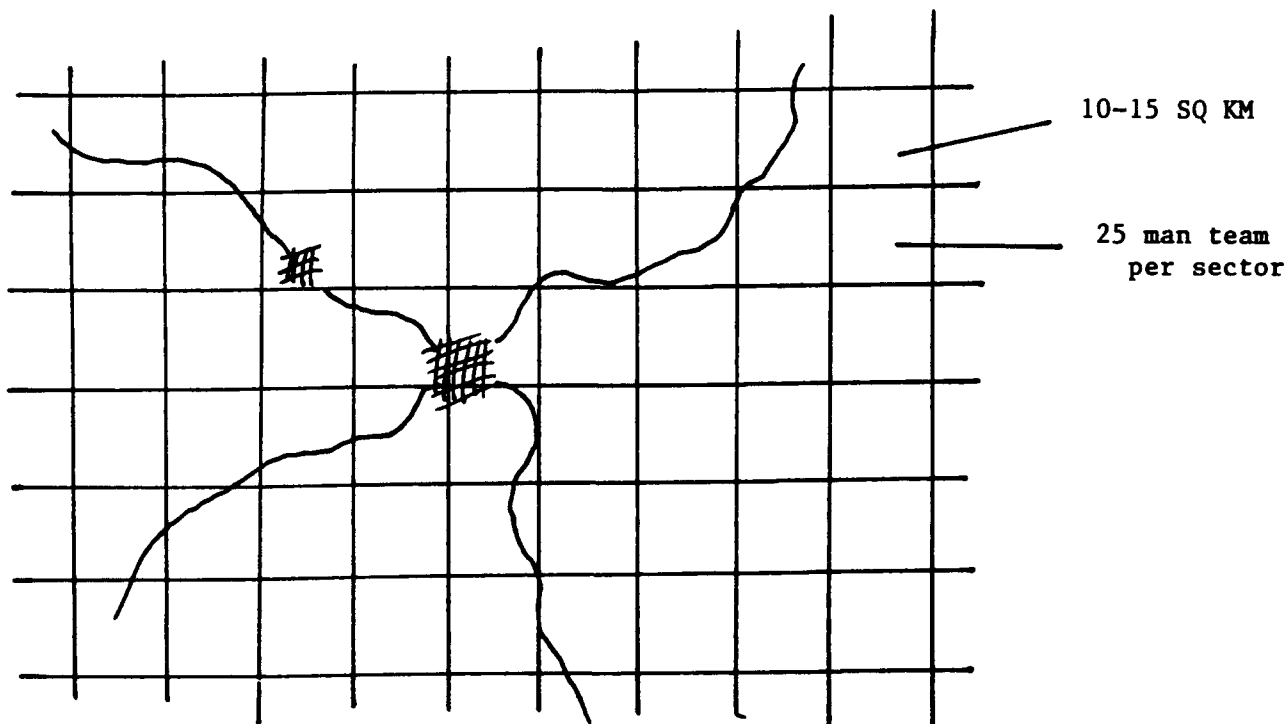


Figure 2/ Area Defense-Chessboard Model

Area Covering Defense Model

A second alternate strategy is the Area Covering Defense Model of Jochen Loser. (Figure 3) This model has three components. A border defense zone is established up to 60 kilometers from the border with "hunter" forces. This zone will be manned to 67% in peacetime. Hunter forces in this area are known as shield forces. This zone will require 50 combat hunter units or 30,000 men from Germany. The second component is an area defense zone. this zone is 150-200 kilometers deep and manned at 33% in peacetime. Forces in this zone are known as sword forces. This zone will be manned by existing German and allied brigades. The third component is the Homeland defense area manned by reservists. Loser goes on to describe his "Hunter" forces. A hunter company is responsible for 90 square kilometers and has 4 rocket systems. A combat hunter group would consist of 3 hunter companies, 1 assault company and one blockade company. This group is responsible for 270 square kilometers. Finally, a hunter brigade consists of 3 combat hunter groups, 1 heavy rocket company and 1 attack helicopter company. This brigade would work in the border zone and behind it and is capable of counterattacking. This concept is very dependent on effective use of terrain, artificial barriers, dispersal and concealment and effective use of high tech weaponry.

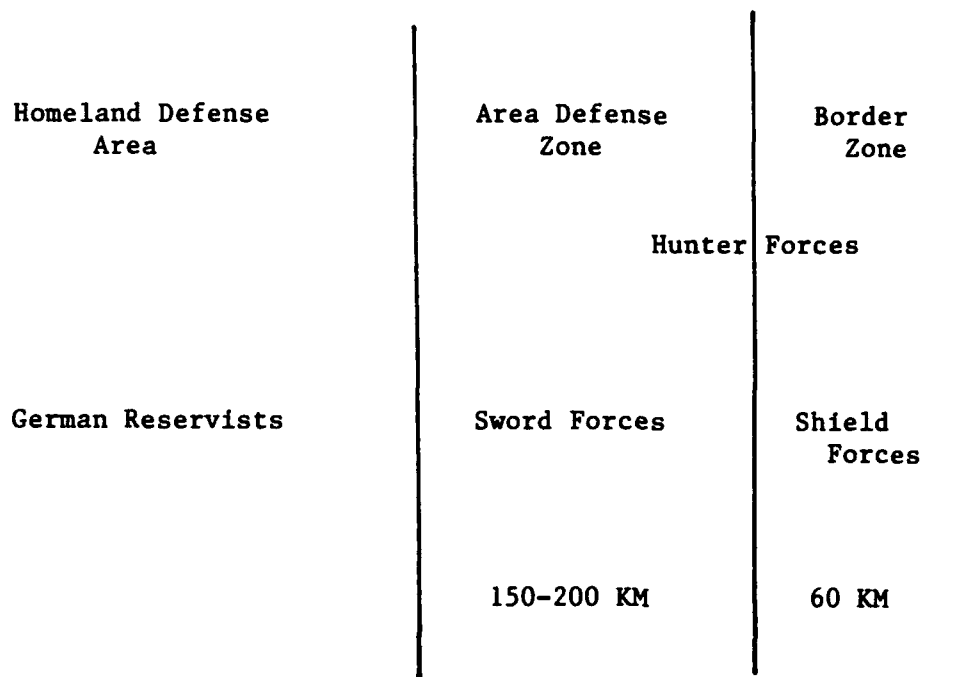


Figure 3/ Area Covering Defense Model

Spider and Web Model

A third defensive strategy and concept is the SAS "Spider and Web" concept. (Figure 4) This plan was developed by a European study group on alternative security policy. As a result it is much more complex than the others. This plan is also based on three main elements. The Web is made up of 450 battalions of network infantry, each assigned a fixed area. Each covers a forward zone 50 miles in depth. There exists no command level above battalion for the network infantry. The Spider consists of 150 battalions of mobile, protected forces which are armored, cavalry and mechanized. These forces are manned at 90% in peacetime. The rear guard is the last element. It protects the infrastructure and is formed almost entirely from the reserves. The network infantry (web) would have a number of

functions.; a combat function; covering function; supportive function; and a political-military function. The spider forces are capable of massing for short periods of time. All infantry web and rear guard units would be German while the majority of the spider units would be allies. This proposal also incorporates an air defense capability with a surface to air missile network and a 400-500 plane air defense fighter force, but no fighter bombers.

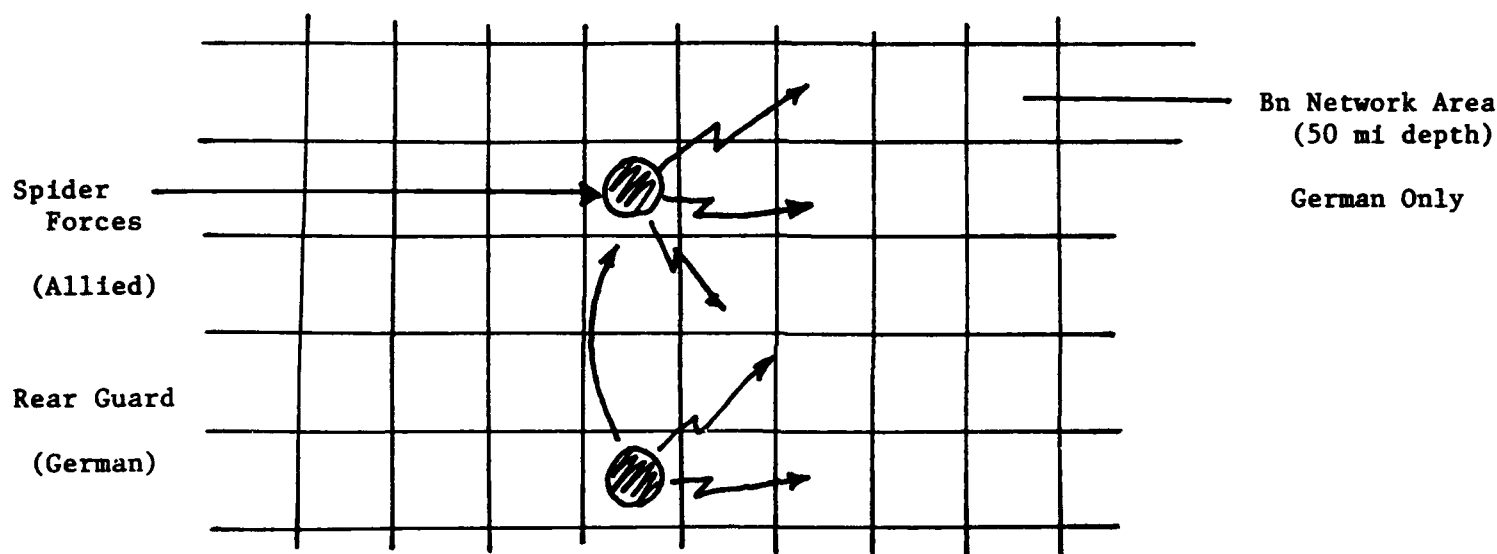


Figure4/ Spider and Web Model

CINCENT Model

The final alternative we will identify is one that the CINCENT, General Hans Henning von Sandrart, addressed on 22 August 1990. He proposed a concept that had Guard forces to signal vigilance and provide an initial collective response. Secondly a rapid reaction force capability which could respond to areas of most danger and reinforce guard forces. These forces could be multinational. Finally a major

mechanized formation or Corps, concentrated in assembly areas in depth, for deployment forward where they are needed. They would have a heavy reliance on reservists and mobilization but would have an in place headquarters. The CINCENT is also looking at the feasibility of incorporating an airmobile or airmechanized division as a reaction force.

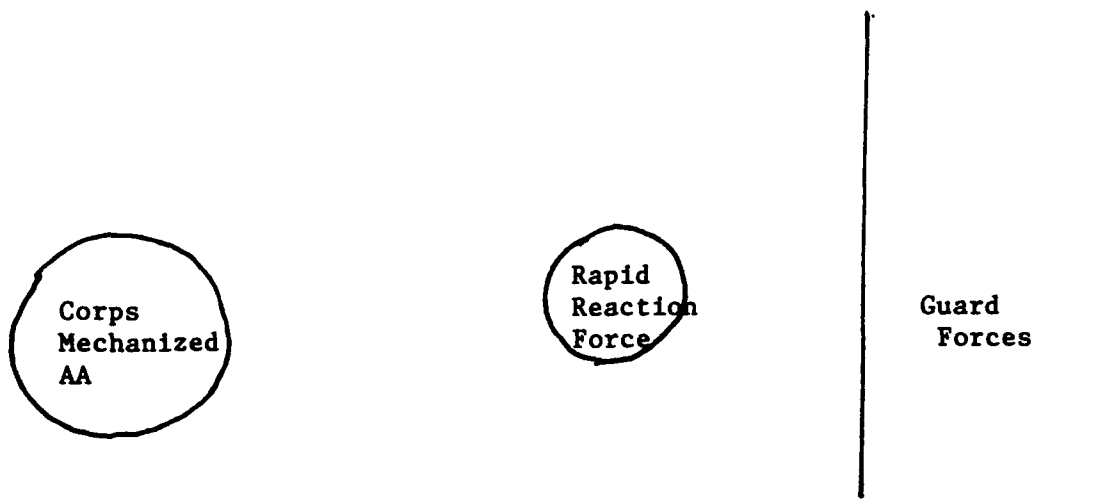


Figure 5/ CINCENT Model

Overview

While the focus of this paper is the current "layer cake" concept and its adequacy, by looking at some proposed alternatives we can expand our outlook on the strengths and weaknesses of the current concept. The alternate strategies are advocating the more traditional area or mobile defense concepts. These are actually more in line with the SACEUR's new strategy. They focus on a multilayer defense by smaller territorially oriented units. These units have highly accurate, lethal weapons to harass and disrupt Soviet breakthrough tactics/timetables. The problem with these

strategies is their territorial orientation and the fact that they are designed to trade space for time. NATO would continue to lack depth with France territorial restrictions and the Germans would want to defend as far forward as possible once hostilities begin.

The question remains, "Can the "layer cake" concept continue to be effective - or adequate given the changing environment in Europe and NATO?"

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS

In analyzing the current forward defensive concept with the "layer cake" deployment, I will use two standards. First I will analyze this concept against the SACEUR's planning principles to see if it can effectively incorporate them. Secondly, I will analyze it against the US Army Airland battle tenets of initiative, agility, depth and synchronization. The tenets of Airland battle apply to any successful defense.

SACEUR ANALYSIS

The SACEUR's planning principles can be broken down as follows:

- Arms Control Dependence
- Dependence on Treaties and NATO
- Mobility/Crisis Response
- Force Generation/ Replenishment
- Incorporates Increased Warning Time
- Deescalation Capability

Arms Control Dependence

Clearly the reduced size of NATO to five Corps and the linear deployment would encourage arms control, and to a great degree depend on it. In this light I feel that the

"layer Cake" deployment would improve its effectiveness with continued arms control dependence.

Dependence on Treaties and NATO

The five Corps multinational force that I have described would continue to depend on NATO and bilateral treaties with other countries. The movement of Eastern European countries away from Soviet influence and formally tied into Western European countries through trade and defense treaties will certainly strengthen this and all operational concepts. In sum, the "layer cake" would continue to reflect this dependence.

Mobility/Crisis Response

The greatest shortcoming with the "layer cake" concept is that it lacks the capability for adequate mobility. Given that the battlefield density will be significantly reduced, the SACEUR's requirement for a mobile defensive concept or reaction force is not met with the "layer cake" deployment of forces. Lateral movement of any one of the five Corps to reinforce breakthroughs will be hindered by the forward and layered mentality. Crisis response, a critical element of concern for the SACEUR, is lacking because of the fixed forward defense. The ability of such a disposition of forces to respond to other than Central front crisis is questionable. With such a disposition of forces you are in a positional defense and will lose all hope for mobility if attacked by a larger force that pins you down. This problem with the proposed five Corps concept is present today with

the eight Corps one. Garrison areas do not coincide with operational sectors, and North-South movements are more difficult than the East-West ones.

Force Generation and Replenishment

The forward defense and layered concept could support this principle of the SACEUR. The very nature of the forward defense demands that the units be at fighting strength as soon as possible. Timely I&W as to the initiation of hostilities is critical because these replacements would be moving to the forward sectors of the defense. Given the two week warning time, a generation capability could be built in but it would be extremely risky. The lateral spread of forces would limit NATO's capability to accomplish such a timely reinforcement.

Incorporates Increased Warning Time

This principle is based on the expectation that there would be a longer lead time before hostilities due to the decreased Soviet threat as a result of CFE agreements and the crumbling of the Warsaw Pact. The forward defense and "layer cake" concept would not take into account this increased lead time. It would certainly benefit from any additional time but it is not a deployment which takes advantage of it.

Deescalation Capability

The layer cake concept would not support this principle. This type of defense actually is one of continued forward

presence throughout the build up to hostilities and the drawdown afterwards.

SACEUR OVERVIEW

A final analysis of the current defensive operational concept with regard to the application of the SACEUR's principles can be summarized as follows:

Arms Control Dependence.....	+
Dependence on Treaties and NATO.	+
Mobility/Crisis Response.....	- -
Force Generation/Replenishment..	+
Warning Time.....	-
Deescalation Capability.....	-

From General Galvin's point of view the layer cake concept does not meet his principle of mobility which requires the flexibility to respond to any threat throughout NATO. This deployment is too focused on terrain verses a flexible response. The current concept also does not take into account the extended warning time that NATO will now enjoy. It is built on a forward defense that is static. In addition, the concept does not contain the rapid deescalation capability that General Galvin is looking for.

AIRLAND BATTLE ANALYSIS-CURRENT

The tenets of AirLand Battle - initiative, agility, depth, synchronization - apply to any successful defense. It is in this context that I will also analyze the current

defensive operational concept of NATO as depicted in my scenario.

Agility

The current concept would establish this layer cake deployment of Corps pressed up against the old Inter German Border. This deployment emphasizes the linear defense of the Central front. Such a deployment of forces would require a more mental and less physical agility. With forces laterally deployed covering the entire front less physical effort is required to initiate contact with NATO forces. Agility requires that formations must be capable of shifting the main effort with minimum delay and with the least possible reconfiguration or coordination. The layer cake deployment would physically commit the Corps to specific sectors, thereby limiting their agility in supporting one another. This is a significant problem given the reduced density of the battlefield.

Initiative

In a linear battlefield there is a limited opportunity to exercise initiative. There will be less battlefield density, but the defenders options are limited by his lateral constraints. This concept reduces the freedom and responsibility to develop opportunities. Time is lost shaping the battle and in making adjustments from such a forward, less dense position.

Depth

The depth of the battlefield and the fight is limited by the physical organic capabilities that are questionable. The introduction of the Rogers Follow On Forces Attack (FOFA) strategy that was endorsed by the NATO military committee in 1984 had as a foundation such an extension of depth into the enemy's sector.¹⁴ This study and the recommendation highlighted the limitations of the organic assets to effectively employ this strategy without an increase in funding and fielding of select weapon systems. Depth will continue to be a problem for NATO due to France's territorial constraints. Elasticity in the defense is to be derived from depth, yet this layered strategy would not focus on it. Our ability to aggressively concentrate our reduced combat power in critical areas will be less than optimal. LOC's through Bremerhaven instead of through France will continue to be a weak point and detract from our operational depth.

Synchronization

Synchronization is required for success in any defensive concept. The layer cake concept is no exception. It demands synchronization of all NATO assets to bring about a favorable resolution to any crisis. It will be difficult to synchronize forces and fires at the point of decision with the reduced troop density and demand for greater mobility. Our mastery of time space relationships, so critical to this effort, is hindered by the inflexibility of the layered deployment.

AIRLAND BATTLE ANALYSIS- FUTURE

In the nonlinear battlefield that the SACEUR is describing in principle, the emphasis continues to be on the defense. As previously stated, the new NATO strategy and concept must be task oriented rather than terrain oriented.

Agility

~~This new concept~~ will require greater agility. Physical AND mental capabilities will be required for success on this dynamic battlefield, much more so than with just a linear concept.

Initiative

There will be even greater opportunities for the exercising of initiative in all combat, combat support and combat service support activities. The nonlinear nature of the future concept and the flexibility demanded of the force will encourage initiative.

Depth

The capabilities for exercising operations in depth on the future battlefield will continue to be essential. This in fact will be a basic assumption in order to have any chance of victory over a numerically superior enemy.

Synchronization

While synchronization in the layered concept is certainly required for success, in a non-linear battlefield

it must be exquisite. This environment will be much more demanding of the commanders as they attempt to employ all assets using their mastery of speed, space and time. Less structure of the terrain will add countless additional command and control requirements.

AIRLAND BATTLE OVERVIEW

Using the AirLand Battle tenets as a measurement tool we have found that the forward linear defense that the layer cake provides does incorporate these tenets and has had the ability to be successful, but this is no longer true. It is clear that the primary maneuver focus is shifting from a terrain orientation to a force orientation. A less dense battlefield will offer the maneuver commander greater opportunities to exercise initiative. Command and control will embrace more command and less control in the execution of battlefield operations. Combat service support must embrace anticipating and agility aspects required of push instead of pull CSS organization and methodology. Finally the command and control synchronization of battlefield operating systems requires tremendous enhancement in a non linear environment.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

I believe it is clear that NATO's current defensive operational concept is inadequate. The concept of a layer cake forward defense sends the wrong political and military signals. It reinforces the very principles that we are trying to dampen. A forward presence and a strong adversarial relationship with the Soviet Union.

This concept does not meet the guiding principles that the SACEUR, General Galvin developed after the London Declaration. In addition it can not be modified to meet them in its current form.

This concept does not permit the maximum use of agility, initiative, depth and synchronization given projected force structures. Most significantly it inhibits agility and initiative at a time when these are critical to the success of NATO's future military operations in a new Europe.

CHAPTER VII

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on my research and analysis of the future NATO strategic requirements, I would recommend the following concept of Flexible Readiness.

It would consist of three major elements. A forward deployed, guard and security element; a contingency element; and a Reinforcing element.

The Guard and Security element would consist of two Corps forward deployed with two divisions each. One Corps would pick up the NORTHAG sector, the other the CENTAG sector. Their unit makeup would focus on the Cavalry Regiment. It would be critical that every nation is represented in this security element. The NORTHAG Corps would have 1 Netherlands division, 1 British Division and 1 Belgian brigade. The CENTAG Corps would be made up of 1 German division, 1 US brigade and 1 Canadian brigade. Each Corps would have a roundout Division, a reserve unit, that would join them forward in their sector when recalled. These divisions would, by design, be German in order to speed reinforcement. On order boundaries would be established in each Corps sector to absorb the reserve roundout division in the forward sector.

A Contingency Corps would be established consisting of 2 US Divisions(-) and 1 German Division. One of the two

US Divisions would be air transportable. This element would be responsible as a quick reaction force to reinforce a Forward Deployed Corps or move to any NATO area of interest. Two of the three Divisions would have NORTHAG and CENTAG orientations. The airmobile division would have no specific orientation. They are responsible for reacting to any threat throughout NATO.

The final element would be two reinforcing Corps of three divisions each. These Corps would be Armor heavy and depend on prepositioned equipment and a substantial call up of reserves. Their headquarters would already be in place. Each Reinforcing Corps would have a NORTHAG or CENTAG area of interest but is capable of reinforcing anywhere in NATO.

This concept would satisfy General Galvin's guidance. It is not terrain oriented when one Corps has the responsibility for 1/2 of the entire NATO front, a front previously covered by eight corps in layer cake fashion. It is tailored for mobility and crisis response. In the worst case scenario we would have the Forward Corps immediately reinforced by our Contingency force. This support would be followed up by the roundout division reinforcement and the possible utilization of a Reinforcing Corps to block any penetration. The best case the Forward Corps is reinforced by his German roundout division and then we retain the flexibility to employ the contingency Corps and Reinforcing Corps as we see fit.

This plan would utilize force generation and replenishment to build the Reinforcing Corps and Roundout Divisions. It is a very flexible concept that can quickly

focus anywhere, escalate and in a timely manner as easily deescalate. I believe it would satisfy the principles that General Galvin has given us.

This plan also would require the skillful use of the Airland battle tenets as previously outlined for a nonlinear force. It would restore the agility and initiative lost in the layer cake employment of forces. Figure 5 is a depiction of this concept.

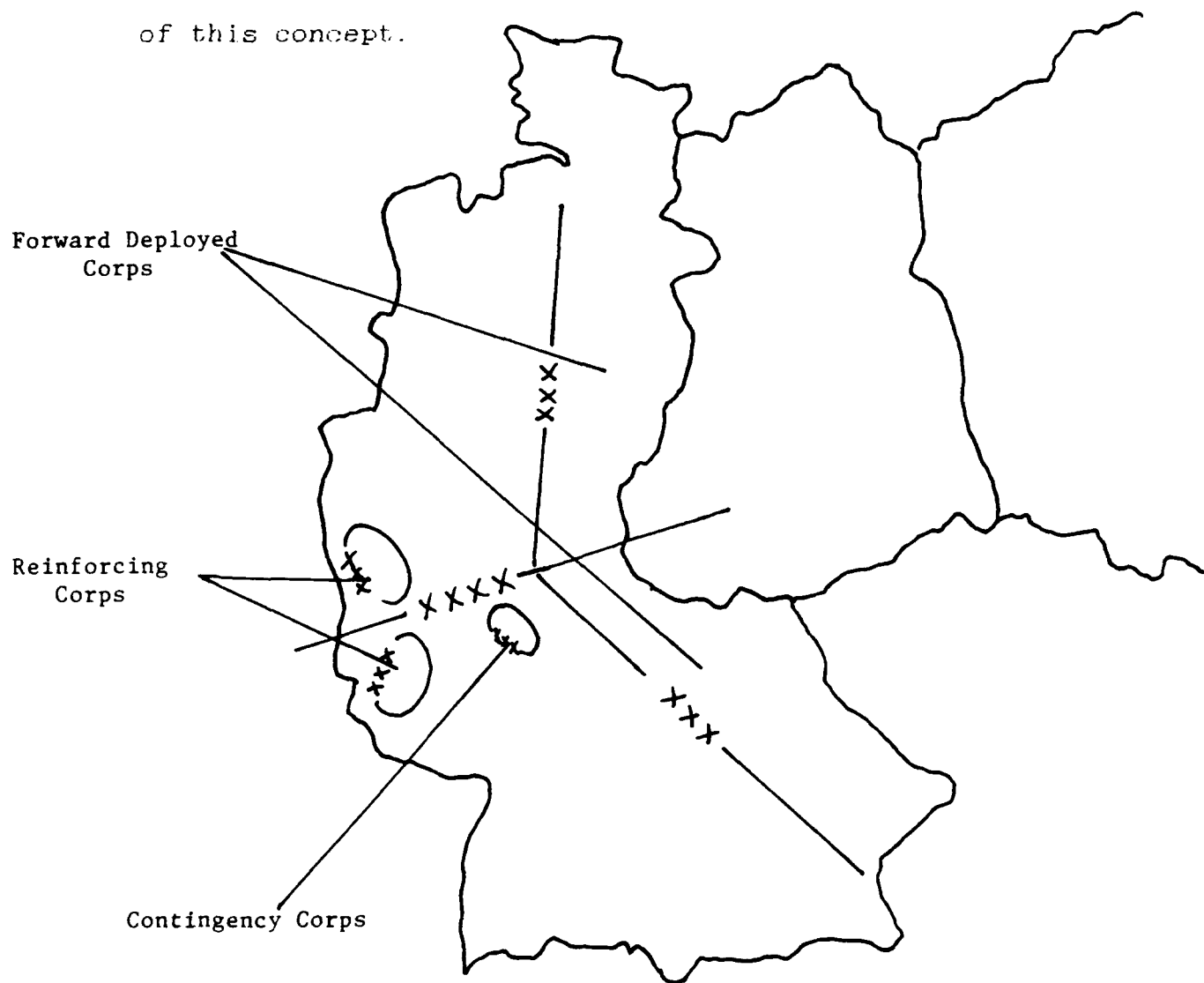


Figure 5/ Flexible Readiness

¹Excellent discussions of NATO's future in both of Keith A. Dunn's books, NATO in the 5th Decade and In Defense of NATO.

²CFE levels outlined Annex A of NWC 2071, "An Illustrative Scenario for Major War in Europe in 1992", NWC, Newport R.I. Sept. 90.

³Current manning level of 22 Divisions taken from NWC 2075 and NWC 2083.

⁴Using the same Soviet force projections that General Galvin has in NWC 2075.

⁵Germany agreed under the "Two Plus Four Treaty" (Kessing's Record of World Events, Two Plus Four Treaty, Articles 3&5, Vol 36, No 10 1990, p 37834.) that she would not occupy old East German territory with NATO troops while Soviets were still present. Territorial troops without NATO affiliation were agreed to. Soviets are scheduled to complete their withdrawal from Germany by 1994.

⁶The following London Declaration discussion is taken from the context of General Galvin's comments in NWC 2075.

⁷NWC 2072. "CINCENT's Address to the Werkunde Kaiserslautern". NWC, Newport R.I. p.12.

⁸NWC 2081. Wolfowitz, Paul D. "NATO and A Europe Whole and Free" Defense 90, p.8

⁹NWC 2075. "Multinational Forces" Edited excerpts of SACEUR's editorial board with the Wall Street Journal on 12 Jul 90 in Brussels. ACE Output. Vol 9 No 3 of Aug 1990, p18.

¹⁰A good source of weapon resource discussion on procurement plans and conventional weapons challenges in David M. Abshire's "NATO, Meeting the Coming Challenge". Ctr for Strategic and International Studies. Washington, D.C. 1988.

¹¹Robert Rudney lists very descriptively the resource challenges and concerns of each NATO member in his book European Security Beyond the Year 2000. Susan Clark does an equally adept job focusing on the NATO demographics and manpower shortages to come in "Demographics and the Military Balance: NATO in the Nineties"

¹²Current concept and percentages taken from NWC 2083. Farrington, Hugh, "The Central Front- Doctrine and Deployments", Strategic Geography, Rutledge, Chapter 10, London, 1989.

¹³Alternate concepts taken from NWC 2074 "NATO Strategy for Post CFE Agreement Europe: Alternatives to Flexible Response and Forward Defense" and from additional insight gained in Keith Dunn's In Defense of NATO, pp 81-84.

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